

Message Text

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ACTION SMI-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 SCI-06 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 /033 W
----- 072418

R 271245Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9674

INFO AMCONSUL CASABLANCA POUCH

AMCONSUL TANGIER BY POUCH

UNCLAS RABAT 3449

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OSCI PFOR MO

SUBJECT: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHEOLOGICAL PROJECT AT
QSAR AS-SAGHIR

DEPARTMENT PASS SMITHSONIAN

SMITHSONIAN FOR WHITEHEAD

1. MINISTER OF CULTURE MEKKI NACIRI INFORMED ME
EVENING JULY 26 THAT HE HAD TAKEN DECISION SUSPEND
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE ALL PERMITS FOR FOREIGNERS EXCAVATE
MOROCCAN SITES AND SMITHSONIAN PERMIT NO LONGER VALID.
HE SAID DECISION NOT TAKEN LIGHTLY AND NECESSITATED BY
BEHAVIOR FOREIGN ARCHEOLOGISTS IN MOROCCO SINCE
INDEPENDENCE, DURING WHICH PERIOD MOROCCANS HAD RECEIVED
ONLY 20 PERCENT OF OBJECTS FOUND IN EXCAVATION HERE, MOST OF
WHICH HAD BEEN SPIRITED OUT OF COUNTRY AND NOW IN FOREIGN
MUSEUMS. NACIRI SAID HE HAD INVENTORY OF ITEMS THUS
LOOTED FROM MOROCCO AND THEY WERE WORTH BILLIONS OF
FRANCS. NOT ONLY DID ARCHEOLOGISTS STEAL MOROCCAN
PATRIMONY, THEY ALSO LEFT SITES IN DISORDER. HE
PLANNING MEET WITH REGIONAL INSPECTORS OF ANTIQUITIES
JULY 31 TO DISCUSS WITH THEM DRAFTING OF NEW SET OF
REGULATIONS SETTING CONDITIONS FOR FUTURE EXCAVATIONS,
WHICH WOULD BE CARRIED OUT UNDER CLOSE MOROCCAN
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SUPERVISION AND WITH ACTUAL PARTICIPATION OF MOROCCANS

ON THE SITE TO PREVENT FOREIGN ARCHEOLOGISTS FROM
SLIPPING THINGS INTO POCKETS.

2. I SAID TO DATE THERE HAD BEEN NO AMERICAN EXCAVATION IN
MOROCCO. SMITHSONIAN WAS VERY SERIOUS
INSTITUTION FULLY PREPARED COOPERATE IN EVERY REASONABLE
WAY WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES. AGREEMENT CONCLUDED WITH
MOROCCANS LAST FALL FOR DIG AT QSAR AS-SAGHIR HAD
FORESEEN PARTICIPATION BY AND TRAINING OF MOROCCANS
AT SITE. NACIRI SAID HE COULD NOT DISCRIMINATE AND WOULD
HAVE TO BAN ALL FOREIGN EXCAVATIONS FOR TIME BEING.
INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT HAVE AT HAND PERSONNEL
QUALIFIED SUPERVISE DIG IN ANY EVENT.

3. I ASKED WHEN NEW REGULATIONS WOULD BE READY FOR
DISCUSSION. NACIRI SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT THEM BE
READY UNTIL THIS FALL, PERHAPS IN TIME TO REACH AGREEMENT
FOR DIG NEXT YEAR.

4. COMMENT: ABOVE DISCUSSED WITH DR. HOLOD AND WE RELUCTANTLY
CONCLUDE THERE NO POSSIBILITY SMITHSONIAN PROJECT GETTING
STARTED THIS YEAR. WE HOPEFUL SOMETHING CAN BE ARRANGED
FOR NEXT YEAR, HOWEVER, AND WILL FOLLOW UP. DR. HOLOD WILL STAY
IN RABAT UNTIL AFTER JULY 31 MEETING TO SEE WHAT PROGNOSIS IS.

5. FOR SMITHSONIAN: PLEASE CONVEY ABOVE TO CHARLES REDMAN,
CARP, BOX 205, RAMAH, NEW MEXICO.PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973RABAT03449
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973077/aaaaaezz.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SMI
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Jan-2002 by phillir0>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2002 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHEOLOGICAL PROJECT AT QSAR AS-SAGHIR
TAGS: OSCI, PFOR, MO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005